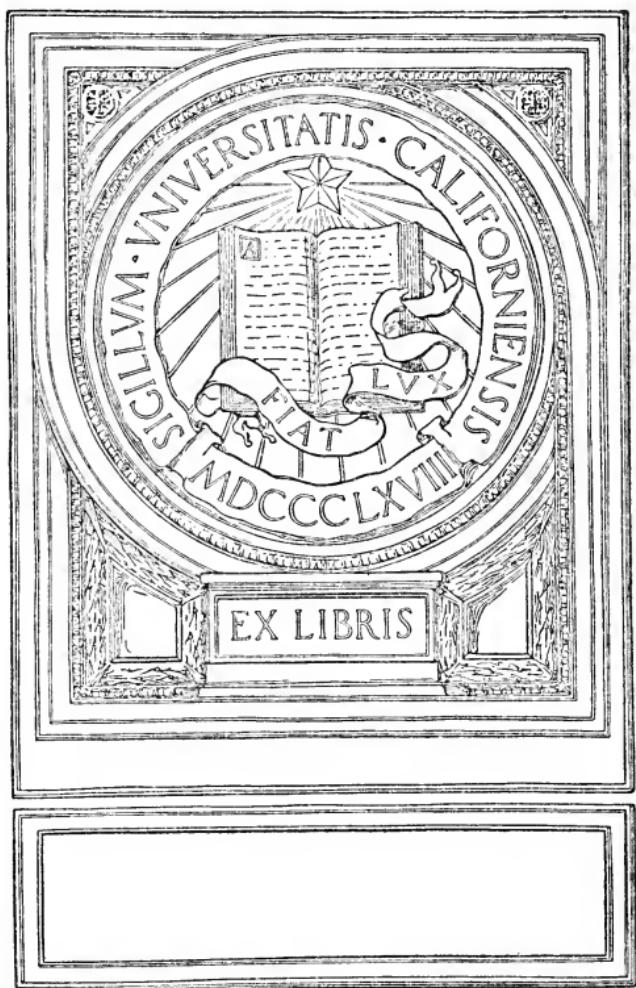


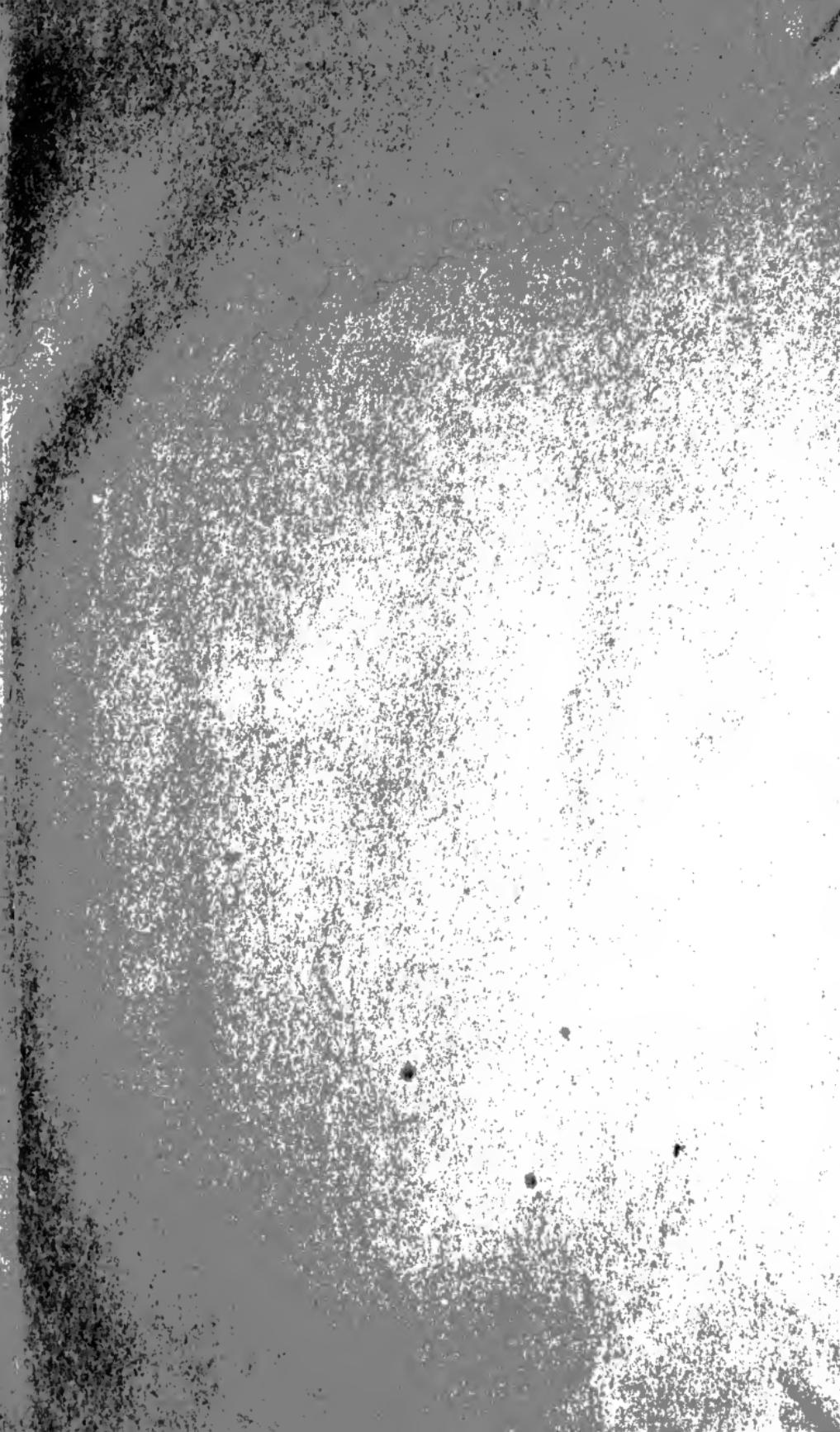
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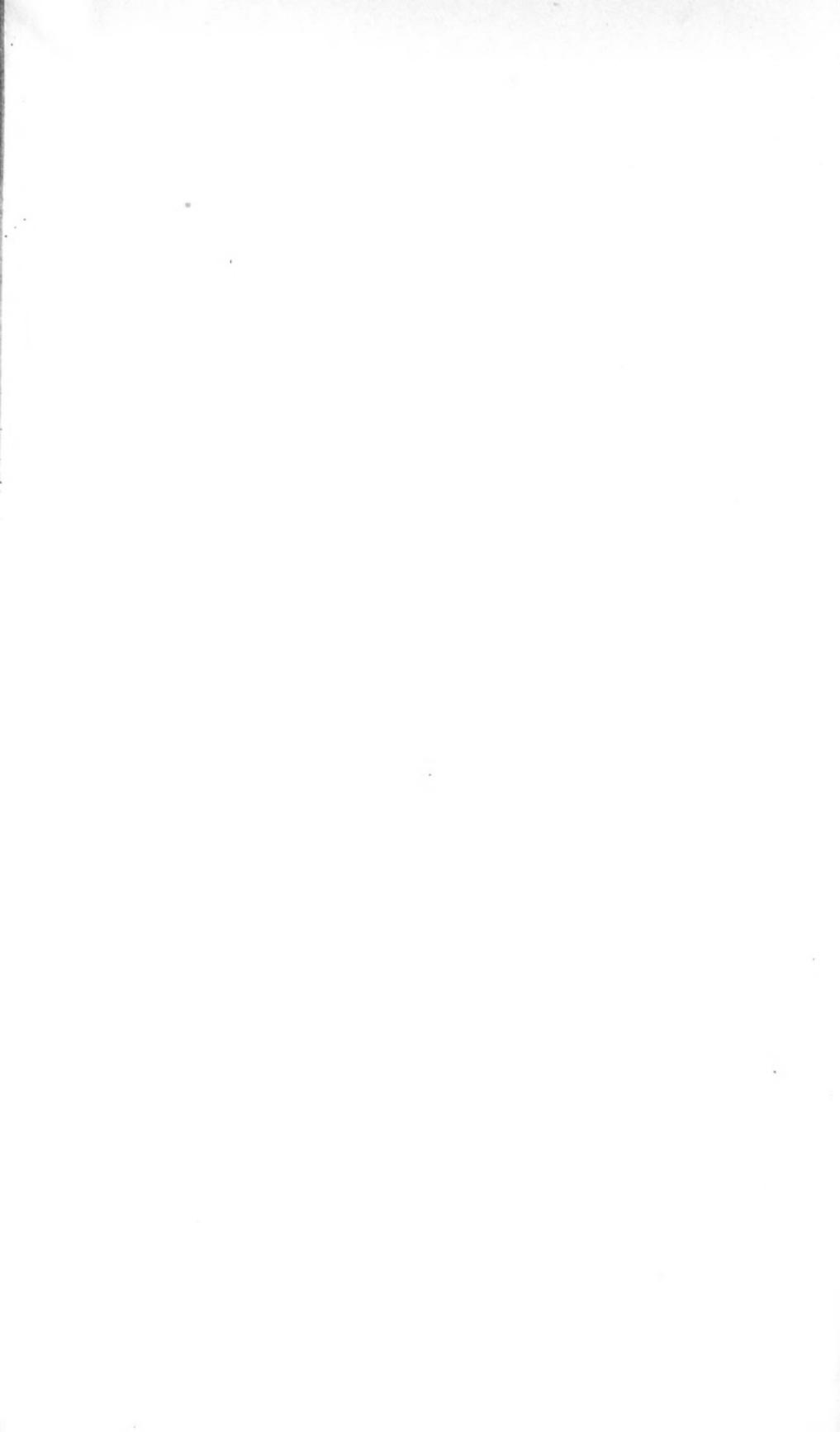
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# **THE HATE BREEDERS**



# THE HATE BREEDERS

A DRAMA OF WAR AND PEACE  
IN ONE ACT AND FIVE SCENES

*By*

EDNAH AIKEN

Author of *The River*

With an Introduction by Henri La Fontaine, President  
of the International Bureau of Peace

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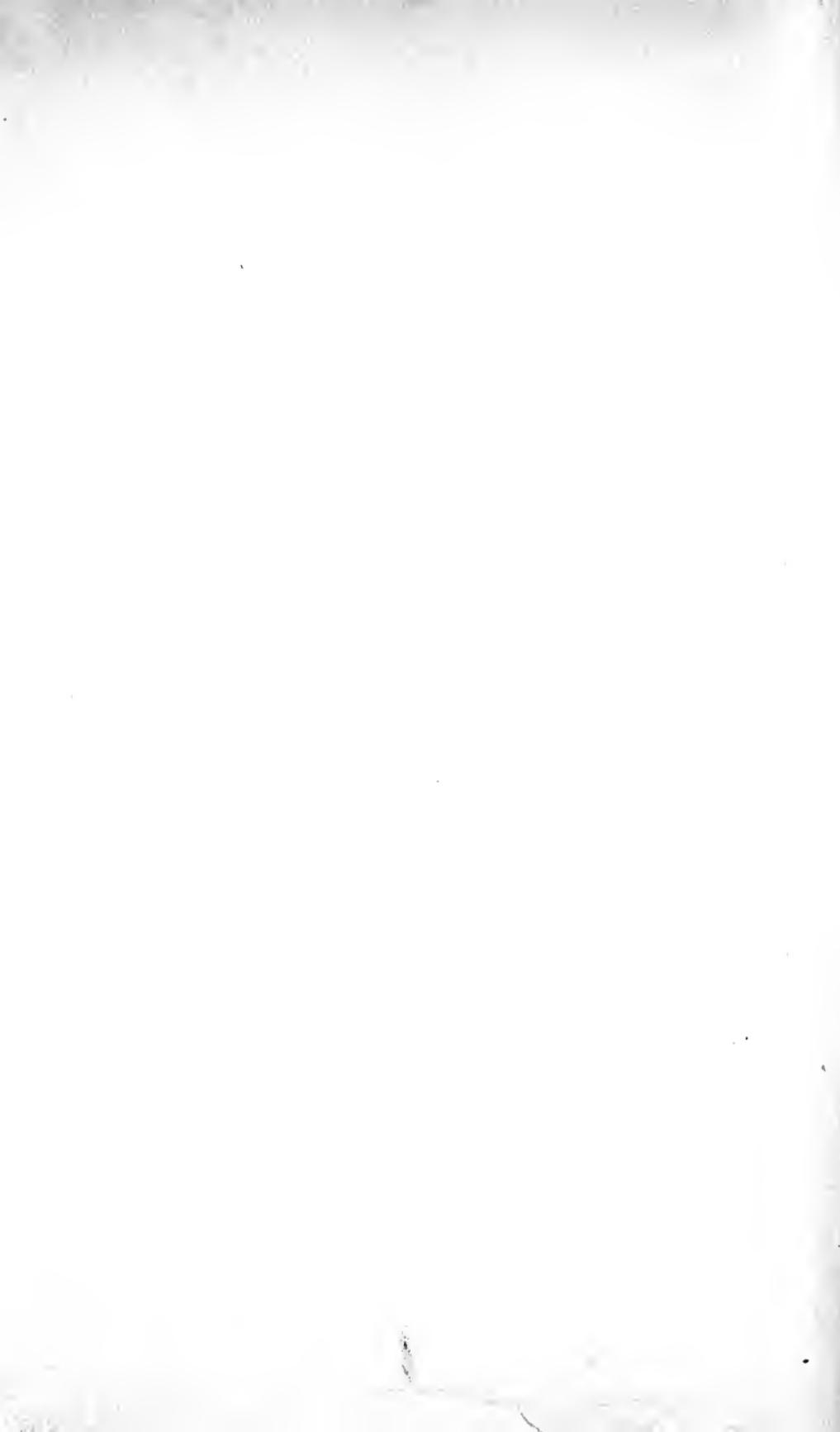
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To "My Son"  
My "Max"  
DOUGLAS SEDGWICK AIKEN

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## INTRODUCTION

Where does the spirit float to on the seething sea of anesthesia? Does it dream, or lose itself, or remember? The German soldier in this play *remembers!* He lives through his revolt against the stupendous stupidity of man, he relives his rebellion against the tricks which lure men to the brilliant death—armies singing, armies cheering in a rapture of pride and might, flags unfurled and waving, in a glory of sunshine and color! He passes again through the grim reality, no more a splendid picture, but a tragedy of blood and groans, of remorse and death.

Terrible in its swift antithesis the unusual and suggestive work before us, enriching American and world literature alike, new in the form adopted, new in its crude realism, it avoids a declamatory tone, and remains human throughout. A nightmare of despair!

To the soldier, struck down in the fight, no other thought is conceivable than to escape by death without awaking from the hell into which the entire world seemed plunged. What other hope could he have, surrounded as he is by sufferings unspeakable, himself, his world, victims! How could he hope for better times when force is worshiped as the almighty power?

Logically, no idea can prevail in his anguished mind but the idea of annihilation, the idea of a collective annihilation of the peoples, of an earth rid of men and freed of crimes.

We, however, the bystanders and onlookers, far off or near the terrible holocaust, we to whom leisure is allowed to ponder and speculate, are we unable to draw another conclusion? Are we ready indeed to agree with the maimed warrior and to support his separate wish? Is death, for the world, the goal of six thousand years of struggle and illusion?

## INTRODUCTION

We have subdued mountains and seas, fire and air, but we have not subdued ourselves. And the earth became a hell by our common and ruthless will. And the kings, emperors and rulers became the satraps of death.

Are we bound forever to repeat, again and again, that war is war, that there was always war, and that there will always be, that men are not masters of their destinies, that freedom for the peoples is a vain dream, that brotherhood is a farce, that races which are longing for peace are doomed to be slaughtered, looted, crushed and killed ; that universal hatred is the normal status of mankind ?

Such are the questions, pressing and countless and confusing, which will pour down on the readers of the following pages. What answer will be theirs ? Will they claim that they are powerless and that it is wasted time to oppose those who want war ? Or will they grasp at last that numerous are those who abhor the bloody game ; that the crowds, by their cowardice and their dumbness alone, have given power to their war-like leaders ? Will they be the trumpets of anger and contempt which will throw down the walls of prejudice and ignorance ?

At all the crossroads, men and women have preached this gospel, but to them the masses have listened with deaf ears.

Here it is, as it is, this cursed war, in this play, with its rapid and striking scenes. May it arouse ideas, and awake hearts and brains, and instil in men the definite and peremptory will to wipe out forever the crime made of crimes, the breeder of crimes, the crime war is !

HENRI LA FONTAINE,  
President of the International Bureau of Peace,  
Professor of International Law.

# **THE HATE BREEDERS**



# THE HATE BREEDERS

## FIRST SCENE

The interior of a château near Louvain. The room, distinguished by a fine renaissance mantel, and decorated in the style of Louis Quinze, makes an incongruous operating-room. An operating table is in the center of the room, in disordered and unpleasantly suggestive condition. The room opens at right into a hall. There are two doors at left. The windows at the rear give a distant view of Louvain. Every little while lurid lights flame up, turning the eyes of the nurses and doctors with pitiful, or gratified, comprehension toward the blaze. The lights die down, and flame up again.

Two Red Cross nurses, both German, are cleaning up after an operation which has just taken place. They hurry, in a scattered, nervous way, every light in the distance, every noise startling them and stopping their work. There is heard a loud explosion, not far distant.

### FIRST NURSE

Dropping bloody towels that she had just picked up.

'A bomb!

### SECOND NURSE

'Ach! Those fearful bombs!

FIRST NURSE

Not far off, that one!

ANOTHER NURSE

Peering in from hall.

Hurry up with this room. They're waiting for it.

Sounds of screaming come through the open door.

SECOND NURSE

What's that?

FIRST NURSE

How near was that bomb?

NURSE

I didn't hear anything.

Retreating.

Withdraws, closing the door after her.

SECOND NURSE

What was that noise? Screams—

## FIRST NURSE

One of the mad ones. They brought in another this morning. He's screamed ever since they brought him in.

## SECOND NURSE

Pitifully, as though she were looking down on the wounded soldier.

Really mad, you mean? Or out of his head, the poor dear?

## FIRST NURSE

Mad, they said. They think he's not badly hurt. But he keeps on screaming. It gets on my nerves. They were going to give him the ray.

## SECOND NURSE

Shivering as she returns to her work.

The mad ones are the worst.

## FIRST NURSE

Cleaning up vigorously the operating table.

Do you wonder they go mad, the smells, the fearful sights, the noise?

## SECOND NURSE

Clapping her hands over her ears as though to shut out memories.

*Ach, the noises!*

## HEAD NURSE

Coming in.  
Is everything ready?

## FIRST NURSE

Bustling around.

A few minutes. It was a bloody mess.

## SECOND NURSE

Stopping in front of one of the long windows.

See! That light! A fire! It's growing brighter. It's a big fire.

## SECOND NURSE

Looking up from the basket into which she is throwing rags and lint and gory bandages.

Is it the mad one next? I don't like the mad ones!

## HEAD NURSE

Set that basket out. I don't know. Each one as it comes. Was the floor washed up?

## FIRST NURSE

We had to do it ourselves. As well as we could in the time they gave us. The charwoman ran off to see if it was her son that was brought in dying. We haven't seen her since. We were not given time to do it right.

## HEAD NURSE

Looking around the room with an expression of resignation in which determination is blended. One can see that hers is a character of executive sternness tempered with sorrow and fatigue. She looks strained almost to the breaking point.

Get yourselves ready.

The two nurses go to a basin, and "scrub up" vigorously.

## HEAD NURSE

Picking up scraps of lint here and there, and straightening things in a weary superficial way.

This will have to do.

The door opens, and a surgeon enters from the hall.

SURGEON

All ready?

HEAD NURSE

It's not very fit!

Shrugging.

SURGEON

We've got to get him on the table before he begins again.

SECOND NURSE

To herself, drying her arms.

It is the mad one!

SURGEON

He's been screaming ever since we found him. He screamed until he fainted. Under the ray. He was pretending death when we found him.

SECOND NURSE

Clasping her hands with piteous comprehension.

He didn't want to live. He didn't want to get well!

Surgeon goes to basin to scrub as the door opens and a wheeled stretcher is brought in, followed by two men, a doctor and the head surgeon, and a white-swathed nurse.

SECOND NURSE

Her sympathy pulling her toward the stretcher, her eyes full of pitiful understanding.

Not mad! Not mad, the poor dear!

The stretcher is moved toward the table as the head surgeon goes to a basin and falls briskly and cheerfully to the work of "scrubbing up." The white-swathed nurse waits on him, holding out sterilized towels and green soap. She is all in white. Her head is turbaned in white gauze; her arms are bandaged with white gauze.

FIRST NURSE

Look! The fire! They are burning  
Louvain!

SECOND NURSE

Crosses herself.

Burning the churches!

## SECOND SURGEON

Get him on the table. Take his feet.  
Careful if he comes to! He's wild.

## SECOND NURSE

Standing with crossed arms, and looking down on him pitifully.

And only a boy!

They unfasten his straps which bind him to the stretcher. They raise him carefully, placing him on the table, feet fronting toward the stage.

## SECOND SURGEON

Have a care! He's coming to!

They all jump forward as the wounded soldier struggles to a sitting posture. He sits bolt upright, deadly pale. He glares at the nurses and surgeons, giving the audience opportunity to see his face distinctly. He is a strong husky lad of about twenty-three. He wears a small mustache, and has three Heidelberg scars across his cheeks, long purple welts. The attendants try to get him down, but he fends them off with surprising strength. The doctor makes a sign to an attendant to get behind him, and together they support him from behind.

SOLDIER

Fiercely.

I won't live. I tell you. I won't live. I won't go back to that hell. You shall not send me back. Hell, d'ye hear me say it?

He glares wildly around at the strange faces that are staring at him.

Hell!

FIRST NURSE

He is raving.

SECOND NURSE

Shaking her head, and speaking softly, as though to herself.

The poor dear! He is not raving!

SURGEON

Coming over from basin, and rubbing his hands complacently. He is a tall bearded man with glasses, which make him look like an owl. He is the type of German doctor who has made up his mind to everything. He has furnished it, that complacent mind of his, as one furnishes a room in the prevailing, conventional mode; has closed all the windows, and pulled to the curtains. There is a ready bland sympathy of lips and

eyes, a mask-like, unwarming sympathy, because he can not understand anything he does not want to believe.

There, there, that's all right, my dear boy. You will be all right to-morrow.

SOLDIER

Trying to free himself from the strong hands which hold him.

I won't live. I won't live. Why did you bring me here? Why didn't you let me die? Do you think I am afraid of death? What is death! But that—hell! You want to send me back there? What right have you? What right have you to say, first: You must not live! And then: You must not die?

SURGEON

Quiet, quiet, *mein lieber*. It's going to be all right. You mustn't excite yourself.

SECOND SURGEON

Get him down.

SOLDIER

Don't touch me. Don't you touch me!

SURGEON

We've got to get those bullets, *mein lieber.*

SOLDIER

You won't. I tell you, you won't. It is my body. They're my bullets. You'll not take them from me. It is my death. You'll not take it from me.

Swiftly, before they realize what he is doing, he begins to tear off his bandages.

SECOND SURGEON

God! Get him down!

They fall on him, and strap him, screaming.

SECOND SURGEON

The anesthesia!

DOCTOR

Ready!

He is in white, like the two surgeons. He holds in his hands the cone for the anesthesia.

## THE NURSE

There, *mein lieber*. Breathe deep. No, quiet. Try to breathe quietly. Try to sleep. Think that your mother is here. No, quiet, my dear. Think that it is your mother who holds your hand. Can you feel it? Hold it tight. No, no, *mein lieber, ruhig, ruhig, bleiben*. Breathe deep, my son.

The maternal words are softly incongruous. Though the madonna light is in her eyes, she looks, in her white swathings, like a girl of sixteen.

Breathe deep, my son!

## HEAD SURGEON

Don't let go of him until he's well under!

The soldier can be seen to struggle under the white sheets, and the cone moves violently.

## WHITE-ROBED NURSE

*Ach, quiet, my son!* There, there, breathe deep! Quiet, quiet, my son!

## SURGEON

Keep hold of him.

NURSE

He's getting it now!

As they stand watching him, one surgeon holding his pulse, his eye on his watch, a small noise starts, like the sound of an approaching electric car, or a dynamo, clap, clap, clap, getting louder as the room grows darker.

NURSE

Leaning over patient.

Can you hear me speak? Press my hand.

To doctor.

Give him more. Can you hear me now?

Press my hand.

The throbbing grows louder, almost deafening, until the room is in total darkness, the light of the fires outside appearing to be slowly shrouded.

VOICE OF THE NURSE

As though muffled, and from a distance.

He's off!

There is an interim of darkness, during which the anesthetic clapping or throbbing continues. Muffled whispers and hurried movements can be heard, here and there a word detaching itself from the throbbing.

More ether! Breathe deep! The gauze!

## SECOND SCENE

When the lights return, an underground beer hall in Berlin is disclosed. It is night. Tables are about the room, surrounded by men in uniform and in civilian clothes. The soldier of the preceding scene, from now on called Max Dohrman, is the center of an excited group.

FIRST SPEAKER

The war is here. We can't stop it.

MAX

We can. If we refuse to fight, if the German Socialist refuses to fight, we will light a torch in Germany that will rouse the world. If the Kaiser's soldiers refuse to fight, how can he have war?

ANOTHER VOICE

They'll drag us in. They'll force us.

MAX

How can they force us?

SECOND VOICE

They'll shoot us.

## FIRST SPEAKER

They'll shoot us, whatever we do. They'll shoot us if we don't fight, and they'll let us be shot if we do fight, and there you are, as I see it.

MAX

Inflammatorily.

What's being shot? What's the death of a few men, a glorious martyr's death, a death for a cause, for a principle, what's that sort of death? Glorious! What's the death of a few men who say: "There shall be no more wars. We are not savages. Nor slaves." Being shot, that's nothing. Being shot, that's all! The death of a few of us, instead of thousands; no, millions! And ruined homes, and a ruined country; and then more hatreds working up more wars! Let's end it. Being shot's easy. God, do you know what war is? It's hell. Just hell. It's hunger, it's fire, it's anger and cruelty; it's lust; it's torture. Just hell. Being shot's nothing. Dying's nothing. They'll shoot

true, our companions, and then it's done. War is done. No more war; king-made wars. No more hell.

THIRD VOICE

Gloomily.

It's hell we're in for.

MAX

Leaping on table.

No, I tell you. No! You can stop it. You and I! We can raise a cry that will wake Germany. She's asleep, Germany is, dreaming the dreams they tell her to dream. Say that the German soldier has refused to fight. Say that there shall be no more war, no more organized murder. This is either the birthday of our freedom, of civilization, or its funeral. But it's now, comrades. It's now!

FOURTH VOICE

To be shot as a traitor!

FIFTH VOICE

The death of a traitor won't help the cause!

MAX

Afire with enthusiasm.

Where are your principles? Your ideas of freedom? Gone at the sound of a bugle call! Who was it said he'd refuse to die the death of a slave and a savage? In this very room! It wasn't a month ago! Carl Heise!

HEISE

*Ach!* But a month ago! There wasn't war then! Now we are called to defend our country!

MAX

Who made it necessary to defend it? Were you asked about it? Closet-made wars!

PROPRIETOR

Bustling up to them.

Careful, *die Herren!* No treason! They'd shut my shop!

MAX

They'll shut your shop, all right! They'll shut your shop, anyway! They'll drag you out, and take your goods. They'll tie a

sword to you. They'll make a target out of you, a target for the Kaiser's cousins. Ay, and our brothers! Who was it said we are all brothers? The one who said: Thou shalt not kill! And why do they say we must kill? For the Fatherland, and what is the Fatherland? Isn't it the people, our brothers? The people they are going to kill by millions? Isn't it the women who send their sons to the firing-line? Isn't it the little children, the children who are robbed of their fathers, the children who must pay the war-debts by the sweat of their backs? Have they no right to say whether they want to be saved that way? Then our country *is* in danger! But war won't save it! War means more wars; more hatreds. We need ports, Germany does, markets for our goods, colonies to consume them. We need a place in the sun. We must fight to get it; we must fight to keep it. Expansion. That's what this war means. And expansion

means more war. Alsace and Lorraine again. What have they brought to us but hatreds?

There is a confusion of voices, out of which the proprietor tries in vain to be heard.

PROPRIETOR

*Die Herren! Die Herren!*

MAX

Tell your Kaiser. Never a better time to tell him. He'll listen to you now. You've got the power. Without you, he can't fight. He doesn't want war. He wants what war can bring to him. The gunmakers, those men who have purses for hearts, they don't want war. It is the only way they can get what they do want, a market for their goods, for their gold fringe, for their guns, for their brass buttons. They are selling the wrong goods! Make them sell the right goods! Make them stop making money out of the maimed bodies of men; out of the tears and shame of women; out of the bur-

dens of a stunted race. We are slaves! Tell the Kaiser to fight his own duel with the Czar, his cousin. He doesn't hate the Czar. He is afraid of Russia. So we're told to hate Russians. Do we hate them? I don't. They're men, just like us. My sister married a Russian.

VOICE

My brother's wife's a Russian.

ANOTHER VOICE

My mother was a Russian. She came from Moscow.

MAX

I told you. We don't hate Russians. But we've got to kill Russians. We don't hate the English, but we must kill Englishmen. It's our business to murder Englishmen, Frenchmen, everybody but Germans. That's our trade, paid murderers.

A VOICE

The English hate us. They are jealous of us, of our trade.

## MAX

They're told to hate us. So they hate Germany, the idea of Germany. We hate the idea of France, of England. That is what the kings teach us. That is what they call patriotism, loving your country, believing it is always right; hating the other countries; believing them always wrong. The kings tell us that; the newspapers rub it into us. We are their fighting machine. We are fed with songs, with the Idea in them; we are made drunk with pride and singing and fury. Singing! The other night—for three nights didn't they keep us whipped up, singing, drinking, crying, "*Hoch der Kaiser, hoch das Vaterland!*" before they dared tell us there'd be war? And then when we were drunk with the Idea, they proclaimed war. And you don't call it slavery? Shot if we don't kill men we don't hate, shot if we don't make widows and orphans of helpless women and children!

And then they must fight, the children, later on, because of the hate we've passed on to them. What end is there to revenge? What end to hate once started? Boundaries to humanity! Why should there be boundaries to humanity? Did the white Christ tell us to kill our enemies? Did He tell you to love patriotism? Kings' patriotism means revenge, killing your brothers. Let's forswear patriotism! Let's crush the Idea! Put in its place the Christ idea! Humanity! Brotherhood! All of you! *Hoch* humanity! Humanity!

## VOICES

Weakly, as though in spite of their fears.

Humanity! Humanity!

## PROPRIETOR

Helplessly.

But this is treason! *Ich bitte Sie, die Herren!*

No one pays any attention to him. He flutters around like a distracted fowl.

MAX

Beside himself with fervor and prophecy.

Humanity! It is the hour! Eberhard, Hans, who is brave enough to die for his principles? Carl, all of you! Down with the Idea! Think of Ehrman!

A VOICE

Angrily.

Ay, what happened to Ehrman?

ANOTHER VOICE

Shot as a traitor! Left a widow and son to be called the widow and son of a traitor!

MAX

It's the system that calls him a traitor. Because we are slaves. Generations to come will know the name of Ehrman!

MAN

In uniform.

I've been ordered to join my regiment.

MAX

Beside himself with impatience.

Ordered! Does that make you go?  
Order your regiment to stay at home! You  
can. It can't go without you. It isn't a  
regiment without you. Oh, why won't you  
see it? On us, the few of us here to-night,  
hangs the peace or the crime of Europe.  
Death for the rebels against slavery, and  
Germany's free! Free to rise to the stature  
of a human being. Free to be called a  
Christian nation; no longer a barbarous  
nation—

VOICE

Take that back!

ANOTHER VOICE

You call all of our heroes barbarians?

MAX

In a rage.

I won't take it back. We're slaves. Is  
slavery civilized? Our heroes didn't know  
any better. We've traveled a long way, the

last fifty years. What makes a sin? The conviction of sin! You've all said it, that you can't make wrong right, and you can't make might right! And that's the rotten kernel—Might! They've buried His law of love miles deep under their forts, under their guns and their cannons, and then they pray to Him: Lord, lead our armies! Every nation is barbarous until she learns to despise that lie. Might is the Prussian idea. The whole world's afraid of it, and so what does it do? Follows the same plan! All the nations straining to keep up a relative mountain of defense, when a relative valley of defense would be as powerful and wouldn't crush the people! Can might keep power? That was Rome's idea, too. And where is Rome? China has seen nation after nation try that same plan, and die. And we scorn China! We haven't learned our world lessons yet; what we take by the sword, we lose by the sword! To set Ger-

many free, that's my patriotism! To free Germany from her shackles, from her superstitions.

VOICES

Germany free!

MAX

Waving his hands above his head.

Hear me say it. *I* refuse to fight. I, Max Dohrman. I choose Ehrman's way. That's heroism!

PROPRIETOR

Thrusting himself forward apoplectically.

*Ich bitte Sie, no treason! No treason, die Herren!*

He stops short as the door at the top of the stairs is pushed in. The street can be seen to be full of people, men and women staring down into the beer hall.

A MAN

There he is.

GIRL'S VOICE

Oh, where is he?

She comes running down the stairs, breaking through the dour group, and flings

herself on Max, who has jumped down at the sound of her voice.

THESI

Oh, Max!

MAX

Why did you come here, my Thesi?

THESI

Oh, Max, I can not bear it. They told me such fearful things. They say you are going to defy the—Kaiser! You are going to be sh-shot! Sh-sh-shot as a traitor!

MAX

Folding her in his arms, and pulling up her face that he may drink up the sweetness of every feature.

It is a surprise to my Thesi? When she knows what I believe, how I feel?

THESI

Sobbing in his arms.

*Ach, it used to sound grand! But then, there was no war. Now, it's different.*

MAX

Tenderly as to a little child.

No, my Thesi, it's not different.

A VOICE

It's true what she says. It is different.  
Orders make the difference.

They turn suddenly to one another, unconsciously huddling. They question with awed eyes the sound of tramping feet coming to them out of the silence of a minute before. There is a muffled sound of drums, of martial music.

THESSI

In ecstasy of fright.

They're coming! They're coming after  
you!

MAX

Supporting her.

Who's coming, my Thesi?

THESSI

Soldiers! They will shoot you! They  
will shoot you, Max!

MAX

Proudly.

Because I am a slave! Because we are  
barbarians! Because we are not free!

THESI

Go with them, Max! Go with them,  
Max!

MAX

To his companions, imploringly.

Stand firm. Don't let them scare you!

The door is flung open as the music dies into the last strain of *Die Wacht am Rhein*. An officer, followed by a handful of soldiers, steps inside. There is a glimpse of uniforms, of soldiers, before the door is shut.

OFFICER

His Majesty, our gracious Kaiser, knowing the grief and confusion which this war so wantonly thrust upon him must cause his subjects, is disposed to be lenient toward the few of his soldiers who have not sprung to their country's need. His most gracious pardon is here extended to those who avail

themselves of this opportunity, their last, to wipe the stain of dishonor from their uniforms, from their families, from their nation. Carl Eberhard!

MAX

No!

Turning from his Thesi.

OFFICER

Carl Eberhard!

EBERHARD

Glancing wildly at Max as though imploring his forgiveness.

Here!

OFFICER

Carl Heise!

Max Dohrman moves as though to interpose himself between the officer and Heise, but Thesi clings to him.

HEISE

Slowly, painfully, as though disowning his child.

Here!

MAX

Comrades, what do you do?

Appalled.

OFFICER

Silence there! Ludwig Stroebel!

STROEBEL

Here!

OFFICER

Franz Weber!

WEBER

Slowly.

Here!

OFFICER

Otto Wideman!

WIDEMAN

Trying to get Max to look at him, but  
Max has turned away, sick at heart.

Here!

OFFICER

Wilhelm Dittmer!

DITTMER

Briskly.

Here!

There is a silence, a tension, before:

OFFICER

Max Dohrman!

Max tries to speak, but his Thesi's fingers  
have gone over his lips. She nods to  
Wideman, beseechingly.

WIDEMAN

Choking.

Here!

MAX

Hurling her from him.

It is a lie. I did not answer. I say: No! I, Max Dohrman. I will not fight. I will not be a beast for any Kaiser!

OFFICER

Then it's death. Death for Max Dohrman.

MAX

Crossing his arms proudly, and smiling at the soldiers who stare at him abashed.

I'm here. Put it down: Death for Max Dohrman.

THESI

Crying.

Max, you must not! If not for your own sake, if you don't care for yourself any more, for your own honor any more, then for your Thesi's sake, for your mother; oh, think of your poor mother, Max! Max! You must hear me!

OFFICER

With distinct emphasis.

Death, with dishonor.

MAX

Folding his arms.

I've chosen.

THESI

Wildly.

I will not let you choose. I have the right to your life. You promised it to me. I give it to your country. You will come back to me. The war will soon be over. You will come back to me!

MAX

*Ach, Thesi, that is all over. The chance of life. Of love. This is death.*

THESI

Shuddering.

A coward's death!

MAX

Fiercely turning on her.

Is it a coward who says: Shoot me! Shoot me now! Tell my countrymen I died to save them!

THESSI

No! No!

Flings herself wildly across his chest, her arms outstretched, facing with collapsed defiance the officer and the soldiers.

OFFICER

Line up. That's a sensible fellow. Your death would be useless. It would be hushed up. No one would hear of it. Your people would be ashamed to tell of it, or to weep for you. Useless. Line up, Dohrman.

EBERHARD

Behind Max.

It's too strong for us!

MAX

His head suddenly drooping, falling into line.

It's too strong for us!

The officer wheels, marches up the steps, followed by his soldiers, and Max and his comrades. As Max passes Thesi, who has fallen into a chair, her head on the table in a passion of weeping, of relief and fear and grief, he pats her on the shoulder. She raises her head to look after him, through tears. As the

---

door opens, the band can be heard playing *Deutschland über Alles*. One by one, the men file through the door. Max, the last, his face as though already dead, is about to pass out.

### THESI

Springing up, sudden realization coming to her.

### Max!

She holds out her arms to him. He walks out as though in a trance, without turning to her bitter cry. As the door shuts, the room darkens, and the anesthetic throbbing begins. There is a period of total darkness, during which the throbbing dynamo can be heard, and the muffled whispers of doctors and nurses.

More ether!

More light!

### THIRD SCENE

The curtain rises on a street scene, daylight, in Königsplatz, looking west down the Siegesalle, or street of heroes, whose statues flank the street. The great Siegessäule, or monument of victory, two hundred feet high, carrying the cannon of despoiled nations, crowns the Platz. Men and women are marching back and forth, eagerly talking; some women are weeping.

WOMEN

*They're coming! They're coming!*

A MAN'S VOICE

*The troops!*

Men, women and children all line up at foot of the Siegessäule to make room for the troops. Their handkerchiefs fly, as a band enters playing the national airs. The troops follow.

VOICES

*Ach, the brave soldiers!*

*My Fritz!*

*The splendid army!*

*The Kaiser's children!*

OLD WOMAN

With a basket, and leaning on a cane.

If I could only get a look at my boy! My boy is out there! If I could only see my boy!

A WOMAN

Turning curiously to look at her.

I heard he refused to fight?

OLD WOMAN

Not fight? My Max? It was wicked lying men who said that! He is a good Christian lad, my Max. Of course he will fight!

ANOTHER WOMAN

I thought he was a Socialist?

OLD WOMAN

*Ach*, he had notions. All boys have notions. But he would never refuse to fight. I brought him up too well for that!

VOICES

Here they are!

The troops!

The soldiers!

The crowd gets in the way of the lame woman as the troops march on to the stage. The band is playing *Deutschland über Alles*. Voices in the crowd take up the song. There is a thrill of emotion in every voice, excitement in every face. Women pelt the soldiers with posies, crying, singing, smiling. The soldiers are halted in their march by some unseen blockade ahead. Eberhard and Max are near the monument to Victory. Eberhard stoops to pick up a blossom at his feet.

EBERHARD

This is better than being shot!

MAX

Sullenly.

A trick. They are heating our blood.  
They are feeding our engines.

OLD WOMAN

I wish I could see my boy!

EBERHARD

Joining in the song.

*Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles, über  
alles in der Welt,*

*Wenn es stets zu Schutz and Trutze, brüde-  
lich zusammen hält;  
Von der Maas bis an die Memel, vone der  
Etsch bis an den Belt;  
Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles, über  
alles in der Welt.*

EBERHARD

Turning to Max as the band stops.

Do you remember how we used to sing  
that at Heidelberg?

MAX

A trick! Heating our blood!

The band starts again with *Die Wacht am  
Rhein*. The crowd joins in the song.

EBERHARD

Nudging Max.

Sing, Max!

MAX

Swept in reluctantly at first, the song fir-  
ing him.

*Es brauset ein Ruf wie Donnerhall,  
Mit Schwert-geklirr und Wogenprall,*

*Zum Rhein, zum Rhein, zum deutschen  
Rhein,*

*Wer will des Stromes Hüter sein?*

*Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!*

*Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!*

*Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht  
am Rhein!*

*Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht  
am Rhein!*

OLD WOMAN WITH CANE

I hear my boy's voice! I hear my boy's  
voice!

MAN

Noticing her excitement.

Have you a son there?

OLD WOMAN

Wiping her eyes.

I heard his voice. If I could only see his  
face!

MAN

Picking her up in his arms.

There, can you see your boy now?

## OLD WOMAN

Oh, I see him! I see him! My Max.  
How fine he looks! My boy! Look at me,  
Max!

## MAX

Singing, waves at her.

*Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht  
am Rhein!*

## OLD WOMAN

Let me down! I must go to him! I must  
go to my boy!

She tries to push her way through the  
crowd which thickens between her and  
the troops.

## OLD WOMAN

Crying, bewildered, not knowing which  
way to go.

I've lost my boy! Where is my boy? I've  
lost my boy!

A voice from the street calls out, *Hoch der  
Kaiser!* The cry surges through the  
street, like a swelling wave. *Hoch der  
Kaiser! Hoch das Vaterland!*

AN OFFICER

To old woman who is getting in the way.  
Stand back! The troops are moving!

OLD WOMAN

But I am his mother! I may never see  
him again! I am his mother!

MAN

In the crowd.

The country is his mother! The Kaiser  
is his father!

VOICES

*Hoch der Kaiser!*

OFFICER

Who has been observing Max, approaches  
him, glowering.

EBERHARD

Nudging Max.

*Hoch der Kaiser.*

MAX

Wildly.

*Hoch der Kaiser. Hoch das Vaterland.*  
*Hoch the great Idea!*

---

OLD WOMAN

Catching a glimpse of her boy as the troops  
begin to move.

Max! Speak to me, Max! Your mother,  
Max! Your mother!

MAX

Stumbling blindly.

The Fatherland!

Amid cries of *das Vaterland*, and *der Kaiser!* the troops march away, handkerchiefs flying after them, tears falling for them. The band still plays. A soldier roughly pushes the old woman back into the crowd.

SOLDIER

Gruffly.

Stand back, woman! Let the troops pass!  
You're blocking the way!

OLD WOMAN

But he is my son!

Sobbing.

I've lost my son! I've lost my son!

VOICES

The Fatherland! The Kaiser! The  
Kaiser! The Fatherland!

Darkness again, and the throbbing as of  
dynamos. The voice of the doctor can  
be heard.

Quick! Give me that knife!

And then the sweet voice of the nurse, as  
though from a distance:

Breathe deep, *mein lieber*, breathe deep.  
Hold my hand!

SURGEON'S VOICE

*Ach, Gott*, he's coming to!

HEAD SURGEON

More ether!

And then muffled rustlings in the dark,  
sound of footsteps running. Then a  
sudden silence.

## FOURTH SCENE

Curtain rises on a gloomy scene. Twilight slipping into night in a deserted corner of the battle-field, by a trench. Over the ground are strewn terribly still bodies. Two soldiers lie side by side, Max Dohrman and a Belgian, the latter mortally wounded, his face graying. Dohrman is lying against a mound of earth, his eyes staring right at You! In the distance, to the right, is the cathedral of Louvain. A few prostrate wretches writhe and moan from time to time, but most of them lie rigid, and one by one the moans die away into the stillness of death. The face of Max can be plainly seen, because of his semi-upright position. He is suffering; his features work with pain; every little while his hand moves over his chest. During this scene, the twilight slowly deepens.

BELGIAN

Weakly.

I want a drink! If I could only have a drink!

MAX

There's only a drop in my flask. Can you reach your hand? This fire in my chest—

BELGIAN

I can't.

Simply.

Both my arms are gone.

MAX

Sorrowfully.

Did I do that? I saw you running. Running toward me. I felt a fury, a fury to kill you! You were the Idea, the great Idea. I had to get you. How you must hate me!

BELGIAN

It doesn't matter, so much, not now! It's war! I got a shot or two into you. But I'm done for.

MAX

Trying to see the other, but falling back again.

It's not so bad as that? God! I mean as good as that! If you had only killed me!

BELGIAN

Haven't you—any one to live for?

MAX

I've a sweetheart, and an old mother. But they wanted me to kill people. The Idea had them, too, of hate. That's patriotism,

hating everybody that wasn't born in your own country. Have you a sweetheart, too?

BELGIAN

I've—a wife! It wasn't a year ago that we were married. There's a baby coming. It may be here now. And I'll never see it.

MAX

It will grow up to be a soldier. It will grow up wanting to kill Germans. He will help cry for the next war. We are war breeders, that's what we are, hate breeders!

BELGIAN

Moans.

A drink!

MAX

God! Is it as bad as that, comrade?

BELGIAN

I'm dying.

MAX

God in Heaven, if I could change places with you!

BELGIAN

Weakly.

You're a German. I didn't know they could be kind!

MAX

We're all men. If we could all meet each other, we'd find we are just men. It's war that makes brutes of us; war finishes what the barracks begin. All this day, I wanted to run away somewhere. I lay in that trench, the sun beating down on my head, the ground steaming from the rain of last night. The sun shone so, and I had terrible thoughts. I wanted to get away from this—hell! I wanted to run and find the white Christ, if He isn't dead, too, to tell Him to stop His children from killing one another. Then I saw you running. I was a beast in a minute. You were Belgium! The thing we must kill to get past you! I shot at you, shot at you, shot at you! Again, and again, and again!

BELGIAN

Some one cried the Prussians were right

---

back of us—the confusion, I was running away!

MAX

It makes us all mad, much of this. You dying, and wanting to live. And I praying for death to come quick! But they won't let me die! They will patch me up, and send me back here, as long as I can carry a gun! And I'll go on killing, killing! You'll go on living, too. Living and killing!

BELGIAN

I'm finished!

MAX

Lifting himself up with difficulty, but falling back, gasping.

Don't leave me, Belgium. I should go mad, lying here, watching you whom I've killed. That's worse than death, madness, watching some one you've killed. I didn't hate you! I didn't know you! Last night, if I could forget last night!

BELGIAN

It rained last night!

MAX

Back there, there are houses. I'd gone after water. A girl ran out from a hut, screaming. There were soldiers, two brutes, after her. She looked like my Thesi. She cried to me to save her. I saved her from them. But God wasn't by to save her from me. See what they have made of me. That's war. I can never forget her face. It looked like my Thesi's.

BELGIAN

Don't stop talking!

MAX

It's so bad, the pain, then? How can you speak to me?

BELGIAN

It's the pain, too, but those men, groaning! And my wife, my wife back there! No one to look after her, now I'm gone. I

don't want to hear my own thoughts. Go on talking.

MAX

'Have you thought what war is? I've lain in these trenches, soaked with rain, burned up with sun, and I've thought, and thought. I've seen the truth about war. Why it goes on.

BELGIAN

His voice growing weaker.

There has always been war. There will always be war.

MAX

There will always be war as long as men think war, plan for war. What you get ready for, what you are always thinking about is sure to happen. They tricked us with the lie that we could prevent war by getting ready for war. It was because we were ready that we wouldn't take time to talk about it. Taking time to talk things over, that's the way to cool things

down. Men should make a law that nations can not fight for a year after any trouble. You've got to settle it by talking after the fighting's done; why not do it first before the wounds have made everybody sore? It looks simple in the trenches. It doesn't look simple outside in the world because of all the money invested. Every dollar a nation invests in war, in preparing for war, it is going to get back in blood. Blood and broken bodies, and fired towns. When the people learn how they are tricked, they'll put an end to war. It's the people who will do it; when they wake up. They'll tear down the forts as they did the Bastille. They'll throw the guns into the sea.

BELGIAN

Gasping.

Yes. Go on!

MAX

Slowly, as though hunting for ideas, gathering fire as he talks.

I said we were breeding hate here. We'll

have to rest for a while, they'll all have to rest for a while, when this is over, and then the gunmakers will begin talking revenge again, revenge and these hatreds. Remember Louvain! your people will cry. They'll work them all up again! Your child, too, maybe. That girl that looked like my Thesi! She'll teach her baby's lips to curse the Germans. Why, we're not fiends, we Germans. See what it does to make all men soldiers! You think it was Germany that ruined your country. I tell you, it was war! Some day the world will understand it. War's the fiend men should make war on!

Max pauses to listen, goes on slowly.

Our homes aren't burned yet, German homes, nor our churches, and we're proud because we say we can keep our enemies out of the Fatherland! Have we? What has war brought to us, in Germany? In my regiment there was a doctor. He had spent twenty years finding a cure for a ter-

rible disease. War came. He had to go, for he was a slave. I saw him shot through the heart. That wasn't one death. Thousands died that minute, the thousands he would have saved. There's a man who wrote books, poetry that makes your heart beat quick, that makes you proud to be a man and a German. I saw him fall; Belgian bullets. More than a man was killed, splendid thinking—splendid helping! There's a man who made heavenly music; played it, wrote it. They made his blood boil with hate. They turned him into a beast, a murdering, ravenous beast. They say's he mad now. Lots of them go mad. They can't stand this. If you leave me, Belgium, I'll go mad, too!

BELGIAN

Gasping.

Keep—on—talking to me!

MAX

The best painter in Germany. His head

blown off! England did it—or France. We've ruined you, Belgium, but we've ruined ourselves, too!

There is no answer. It has grown dark. The two men lie silent. Max, questioning at last the silence, tries to see the face of the Belgian. Listens with rising terror.

MAX

At last.

I can't hear him breathe. Belgium! Speak to me! Breathe for me! Belgium!

Again there is silence on the field of death.  
Max listening.

MAX

His voice shrilling.

He's gone!

It grows darker. The dead are scarcely visible. The stricken wretches have stopped their writhings.

MAX

Don't leave me, Belgium! I'll see *her* face, the girl that looked like my Thesi. I'll see your face, the man I butchered, taunting me, Max Dohrman, murderer.

Stay with me, talk to me! Stay till the night is gone. Belgium! Just one word! Moan, moan, anything, just live, Belgium! I'll go mad! Those smells; The dark! Those faces, blue eyes, like my Thesi!

Silence.

My cartridges gone! Not one, God! to end it! If I could reach his belt! I'll reach his belt!

Crawls, moaning piteously, slowly toward the body of the dead soldier.

They won't find me! I won't be here when they come!

Reaches, painfully crawling, the body of the Belgian.

God's hell! Lying on it! Fire in my chest! Fire in my head! Pain! Pain! Don't look at me that way, Thesi! I didn't know it was you, Thesi! You sent me; it was you, you! If women knew what war is, they wouldn't want their men to be soldiers. You didn't want me to be a coward; you wanted me to kill that poor Bel-

gian—! I didn't hate him! God, the brute I am! Don't look like that, Belgium!

Covers his face with his hands.

Lying on your belt to get even with me!  
God, you're even. Alone, alone! Where's my knife? Gone, too! Don't you look at me, don't you touch me!

Screams.

Belgium!

The darkness is intense, and the silence. Only the beating, like that of a frightened heart, can be heard, clapping like a dynamo somewhere, beyond, outside, throbbing, throbbing. Then in the background come lights, like fireflies moving close to the ground, flickering over the field. Dark shapes, as of silent men, are behind them. Then they all pass away but one, which settles against the wall of the cathedral. It swells into a great white moon, growing larger—a great Brobdingnagian moon. Over its surface, pictures begin to play.

## PICTURES

*'A doctor in his laboratory at work. Into his room comes an officer who looks like the Kaiser. He hands the doctor orders. There is the sound of martial music; of Deutschland über Alles. The doctor drops his vial as he stretches out his hand for the orders.'*

*Comes a woman into the room, and pleads with him, clinging to him. He kisses her, and tears himself from her arms.*

*A man sits at his desk writing. He raises his head, as though challenging a sound. He jumps to his feet, raising a window back of his desk. Cries of Hoch der Kaiser, hoch das Vaterland? He throws down his manuscript, and rushes from the room.*

*A man at a piano, playing dreamily, as though improvising. The Kaiser officer enters, throws the sheets of music lying on the piano roughly to the ground. He points to the open door, and one hears a band in the distance, as though veiled, playing Deutschland über Alles. As in a trance, the player follows the officer from the room, gazing wistfully back as though saying farewell to all his dreams.*

*A painter at his easel. Comes the sound of marching music, comes the sound of marching feet. He throws down his brushes, and jumps up, to face the officer. The far-off strains of Deutschland are heard.*

*A peaceful fireside scene. A man with his children, his wife, and his old mother, who is knitting. Into this peace strides the Kaiser officer, and throws the orders into the man's hands. Peace becomes woe. The wife weeps and pleads with the officer. The children cast themselves upon him. The old mother's knitting drops to the ground, her face showing a terrible despair.*

*The next scene is one of battle. One scene after another passes across the Brobdingnagian moon. Men in the trenches; men firing guns; men shooting at human*

*targets; men dying. And then, the light is seen to dwindle; it moves low to the ground; comes nearer to Max, until it is seen to be a bull's eye lantern carried by a doctor. He is followed by an assistant.*

MAX

Whispering.

Coming! Coming to find me! I shall fool them! I shall not breathe!

Lies motionless as the lantern draws nearer.  
The doctor and his assistant stop to examine the bodies, listening, prodding.

SURGEON

His hand on the Belgian's heart.

Dead. Quite cold.

ASSISTANT

Touching Max.

Both dead. Hold on! I'm not sure about this one! This one's not dead!

SURGEON

He's not dead! Give me that light. His pulse is all right. Why, we can save this one!

MAX

Suddenly yelling.

You won't save me! I won't let you save me! I won't come back here! Do you hear me? I won't come back to this hell! Kill me here! Finish your work! *Hoch* the great Idea! Let it live forever, the great Idea, Might! Let it kill Germany!

SURGEON

Straightening.

Another of the mad ones!

ASSISTANT

Poor devil!

SURGEON

We must rush him to the hospital!

Puts a whistle to his lips. Blows.

MAX

Wildly.

Kill me here! Bury me with the poems and the music, with the books and the discoveries! Burn us all up! Burn us over there!

Points to horizon, where a fire is beginning.  
The outlines of the church can be seen.

ASSISTANT

Firing Louvain?

MAX

The world is burning! Civilization is  
burning!

SURGEON

We'll have to strap him.

MAX

Everything is gone but hate!

SURGEON

Hold his hands. He'll hurt himself.

MAX

*Hoch* the great Idea!

Men come, carrying a stretcher. As they  
are raising him, the bull's eye lantern  
full upon him, a gust of wind comes,  
blowing the blankets which the men  
hold into sails.

SURGEON

Wrap him up. A cold wind's rising.

The wind increases, and the lanterns ap-  
pear to be blown out. Darkness wraps

the battle-field. The anesthetic throbbing begins. The sound of hurrying steps are heard, and whispers, indistinguishable whispers.

Before the lights flare out again, the voice of the surgeon is heard.

SURGEON

Quick, a towel!

NURSE

He's coming to.

## FIFTH SCENE

The lights come on. The operating-room is disclosed. The surgeons and the nurses are bloodspattered. The table, the space around the table are gory.

DOCTOR

To surgeon.

Shall I give him more ether?

SURGEON

Let him come to.

WHITE-WRAPPED NURSE

Tenderly.

There, quiet, my son. There, there, my boy. You have had a nice sleep, *mein lieber*. You've been dreaming.

MAX

Dead! Dead!

His voice is thick.

SURGEON

Living! Far from dead, *mein lieber!*

SECOND NURSE

Impulsively.

Oh, why can't you let him think it a while longer? Don't torture him yet!

SURGEON

Staring at her through his large glasses solemnly, as though she were a child speaking when not spoken to. She retreats.

No, *mein lieber*. Living! We've saved another brave soldier for his regiment. In six weeks—

SECOND SURGEON

Quick, hold his hands!

Doctors and nurses hold him. Outside in the distance a bomb explodes, blanching the faces of the nurses.

MAX

Stares, then screams.

You've patched me up, you'll send me back to that? God, why didn't you kill me? Don't look at me like that, Thesi!

Looks wildly at the white-robed nurse.

Blue eyes, blue eyes, like my Thesi! I thought she was an angel, too, but she was

mad, like all the world. Mad to kill. It is burning us all up. I didn't hate you, Belgium. You were in my way. I had to get you, to get past you! It wasn't my fault! I didn't begin it! The others began it! I didn't hate any one! He said not to kill—

Exhausted, he falls back.

SURGEON

Raving again! He'll be all right to-morrow. He's not out of the ether yet.

SECOND NURSE

Shaking her head sadly.

He's not raving. He's seen the truth out there!

Nobody listens to her.

MAX

With superhuman strength, suddenly pulls himself up.

Kill me! Burn me!

They fall on him, and get him down.

SURGEON

Strap his feet!

Enter the head nurse, followed by attendants. She motions them toward the soldier on the table. They move forward, with the stretcher.

HEAD NURSE

Turning briskly to the other nurses.

Clean up for the next!

MAX

Screams as the attendants touch him.

Slaves!

QUICK CURTAIN



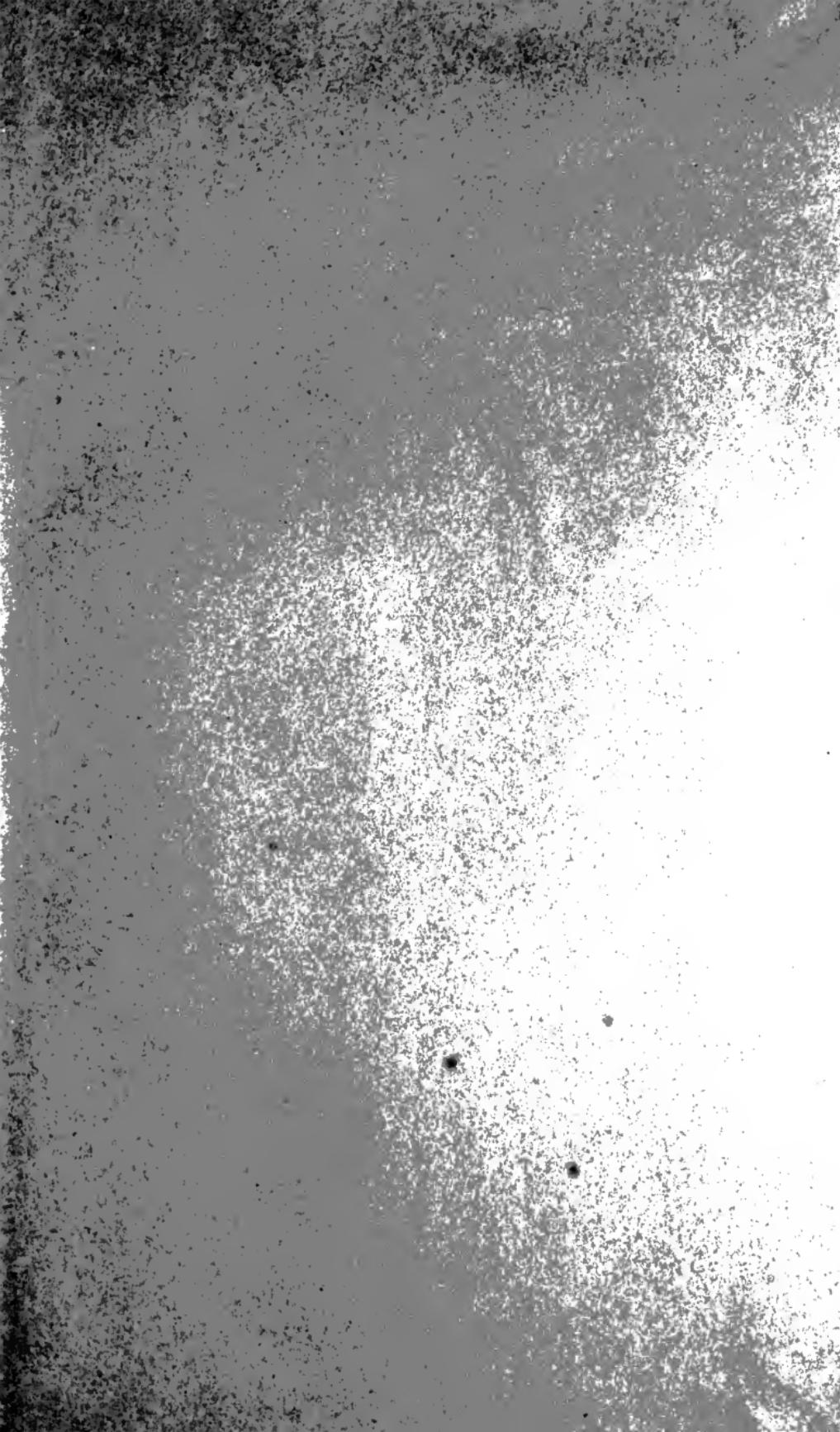












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